

**National Recreation and Park Association
Certified Playground Safety Inspector
Examination**

Candidate Handbook



**National Recreation and Park Association
National Certification Board
22377 Belmont Ridge Road
Ashburn, VA 20148
(703) 858-0784**

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INTRODUCTION

This examination is one of the principal requirements for certification as a "Certified Playground Safety Inspector" (CPSI). The examination is administered under the auspices of the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), the National Playground Safety Institute (NPSI) and the National Certification Board (hereafter referred to as NCB).

About the Certified Playground Safety Inspector Examination

The purpose of the CPSI Certification is to enable those who successfully complete the exam to:

- Identify hazards on public playground equipment and the playground
- Rank the hazards according to injury potential
- Apply the knowledge to remove the hazards and establish a system of inspections

The desired outcome is that a Certified Playground Safety Inspector (CPSI) is capable of establishing the basics of a sound risk reduction program, is able to audit a playground, establish a system of repair, retrofit and removal of hazardous equipment and establish a routine inspection system for their own agency or playground owner-client.

Examination Development

The NRPA understands that achieving the CPSI certification does not make one an expert in the implementation of the public use playground standard of care. However, the NRPA does recognize all program participants should acquire the knowledge and specific competencies necessary to attain certification as identified by the CPSI Certification and Exam Committees. This knowledge properly and consistently applied in the field will help to create an experience level necessary to be considered a playground safety expert.

All examination items (questions) have been written and reviewed by subject-matter experts representing playground safety experts and practitioners from many geographical regions. These individuals provide the job-related perspective and expertise that underlies valid examinations.

About the Testing Agency

NRPA and the NCB have the overall responsibility for the examination and have contracted with a professional testing agency to administer and provide guidance.

Pearson VUE/Professional Testing Inc.(PTI) is the professional testing agency contracted by NRPA and assists in the development of the computerized examination based on the test specifications developed by the CPSI Certification and Exam Committee in consultation with the testing agency. The testing agency is responsible for the establishment of test centers, security, administration, scoring and analysis of the examinations and reporting scores to candidates who take the examination under the direction of the NRPA.

SECTION I: ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND RULES FOR EXAMINATION

Individuals seeking certification as a CPSI must receive a passing grade on the CPSI certification examination. Maintenance of the CPSI certification requires at least a passing grade on the CPSI certification examination every three (3) years.

<u>Examination Fee</u>	\$200
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You must schedule a test date by the date on the postcard or you will forfeit your payment.

No-shows/ Failing the examination - Candidates who fail to appear for an examination or fail the examination, are not entitled to a refund, nor will the fees be applied to the next exam administration. The Candidate will need to fill out a new application and reapply to sit for the exam.

Cancellations – A candidate who cancels his/her examination after confirmation of eligibility is received forfeits the application and all fees paid to take the examination. The Candidate will need to fill out a new application and reapply to sit for the exam.

Steps in Certification Process

1. Go to the NRPA certification website (www.nrpa.org/cpsi).
2. Complete application and submit the application and fee to the NRPA.
3. Please read the Candidate Handbook carefully. There are tips on how to study for the exam and other important testing information.
4. You will receive an email or letter from the NRPA with information on how to set up the date, time and location of your test through the Person VUE website, www.pearsonvue.com/nrpa or by phone 1-866-362-2965. If you have not received your email or letter within one month of submission of your exam application and fee, please contact NRPA directly at 1-800-626-6772 to schedule your exam.
5. You will receive a confirmation letter from Pearson VUE with information about your testing location, date and time of exam.
7. Report to the examination site at the scheduled testing time.

You must schedule a test by the date indicated on the email or you will forfeit your payment.

Scheduling the Exam

The NRPA will provide the toll free number and website for scheduling exams with the professional testing agency Pearson VUE. Please call this number 1-866-362-2965 or access the website (www.pearsonvue.com/nrpa) to find a location or set up time and day for testing.

When you call to schedule an appointment for the examination, you will be notified of the time to report to the center. **UNSCHEDULED CANDIDATES (WALK-INS) WILL NOT BE ADMITTED** to the testing center. You will receive a confirmation letter from Pearson VUE with your testing location date and time of the exam.

A candidate may reschedule ONE appointment for examination at no charge by calling or visiting the Pearson VUE website at least **four** business days prior to the scheduled testing session.

Services for Individuals with Disabilities

The NRPA, NCB, and Pearson VUE are committed to ensuring that no individual with a disability is deprived of the opportunity to take the examination solely by reason of that disability. A candidate who has a disability may request special accommodations; the request must be submitted in writing at the time of application. The request form is available online at www.nrpa.org/cpsi. A written description of the disability and verification from a licensed physician should be included with the application. You must also inform Pearson VUE of your NRPA approved special accommodations when scheduling your examination time.

Inclement Weather or Emergency

In the event of inclement weather, other acts of God or unforeseen emergencies on the day of an examination, Pearson VUE will determine whether circumstances warrant the cancellation, and subsequent rescheduling of an examination. The examination will usually not be rescheduled if the assessment center personnel are able to open the assessment center.

Candidates may call the testing site directly (please refer to your confirmation letter for the phone number) to determine the center's availability during inclement weather or emergency. Every attempt is made to administer examinations as scheduled; however, should an examination be canceled at an assessment center, all scheduled candidates will be contacted regarding a rescheduled examination date or reapplication procedures.

Please read the following information carefully so that you are fully prepared on the Examination Day

- Report to the assessment center no later than your scheduled testing time. **A CANDIDATE WHO ARRIVES MORE THAN 15 MINUTES AFTER THE SCHEDULED TESTING TIME WILL NOT BE ADMITTED**
- To gain admission to the assessment center, a candidate needs to present two forms of identification, one with a current photograph. Both forms of identification must be current and include the candidate's current name and signature. The candidate will also be required to sign a roster for verification of identity. Acceptable forms of photo identification include: a current driver's license with photograph, a current state identification card with photograph, a current passport, or a current military identification card with photograph. Employment ID cards, student ID cards, and any types of temporary identification are not acceptable. **YOU MUST HAVE PROPER IDENTIFICATION TO GAIN ADMISSION TO THE ASSESSMENT CENTER.**
- Prior to attempting the examination, you will be given the opportunity to practice taking a test on the computer.
- Following the practice test, you will begin the actual examination. Instructions for taking the examination are provided on-screen. 2 hours are allotted to complete the examination, practice exam and survey.
- The computer monitors the time you spend on the examination. The examination will terminate if you exceed two hours. You may click on the "Time" box in the lower right-hand corner of the screen or select the TIME key to monitor your time. A digital clock indicates the time remaining for you to complete the examination. The time feature may also be turned off during the examination.
- Candidates will not be allowed to take the following types of personal items into the testing room: cellular phones, hand-held computers/personal digital assistants (PDAs) or other electronic devices, pagers, watches, wallets, purses, hats, bags, coats, books and notes. Studying is not allowed in the test center.
- Candidates will store these items in a secure area indicated by the administrator. Cellular phones, pagers, and other electronic devices must be turned off prior to placing them in the designated secure area. The testing center is not responsible for lost, stolen or misplaced personal items.

- Candidates will not use exam specific materials until after the exam has started. Candidates will not remove these items from the testing room at any time during the exam, and will return them to the administrator immediately after the exam.
- The administrator will log the candidate in to the assigned workstation, verify that he/she is taking the intended exam and start the exam. Candidates will sit in assigned seat until escorted out by a Test Administrator. Eating, drinking, smoking, chewing gum and making noise that creates a disturbance for other candidates are prohibited during the exam.
- The administrator will monitor candidates continuously while they take the exam. The session may be videotaped or otherwise recorded for security or other purposes.
- If the candidate experiences problems that affect their ability to take the exam, they will notify the administrator **immediately**.
- The administrator cannot answer questions related to exam content. If the candidates have questions of this nature, they will contact the NRPA after leaving the testing center.
- If the candidate takes a **break** the exam timer will **not** be stopped. The administrator will set the workstation to the break mode, and the candidate will take their ID with them when they leave the room. The administrator will check the candidates ID before they can return to their seat and will then restart my exam.
- While taking a **break**, the candidate will not be allowed access to personal items other than medication required at a specific time and with the approval of the test administrator. Items not permitted include but are not limited to: cellular phones, exam notes and study guides, unless specifically permitted by the NRPA.
- Candidates will not try to remove copies of exam questions and answers from the testing center, and will not share or discuss the questions or answers seen in my exam with other candidates.
- After the exam ends, the administrator will come to the candidate's workstation and ensure their exam has ended properly. The exam score will display on the screen after the exam.
- **Candidate Privacy** – Exam results will be encrypted and transmitted to Pearson VUE and to the NRPA. The testing center does not keep any information other than when and where your exam was taken. The Pearson VUE Privacy Policy Statement provides additional information regarding this; you can obtain this by visiting the Pearson VUE Web site (www.pearsonvue.com) or by contacting a Pearson VUE Call Center.

Copyrighted Examination Questions

All examination questions are copyrighted property of The NRPA. It is forbidden under federal copyright law to copy, reproduce, record, distribute or display these examination questions by any means, in whole or in part. Doing so may subject you to severe civil and criminal penalties.

Release of Information

NRPA, NCB, and the testing agency are all committed to protecting the confidentiality of candidates' records and have adopted policies to ensure their privacy. Information about candidates for credentialing and their examination results are not routinely released to any third party. Notification of pass/fail goes solely to NRPA.

Following the Examination and Scoring of Results

After you finish the examination, you are asked to complete a short demographic survey. Then, you are instructed to report to the examination proctor to receive your score report. At this time you will receive a score report. Scores are reported in written form only, in person, or by US Mail. Scores are not reported over the telephone, by electronic mail or by facsimile.

The passing score for the examination reflects the amount of knowledge that a committee of experts has determined to

be appropriate for certification. A criterion-referenced standard setting procedure and expert judgment was used to evaluate each item on the examination in order to identify the passing point. Your ability to pass the examination depends on the amount of knowledge you display, and not on the other individuals taking the test. Although different forms of the examination can vary somewhat in difficulty, passing the examination has historically required candidates to answer approximately 70 percent of the questions correctly.

Subsection scores are reported as raw scores. The sum of your subsection scores equals the number of items you answered correctly on the entire examination. The reason for reporting subsection scores is to enable you to evaluate your performance on each part of the test.

Duplicate Score Reports

Candidates may purchase additional copies of their score reports at a cost of \$10 per copy. Duplicate certificate request forms can be found on the NRPA website at www.nrpa.org/cpis. Duplicate score reports will be mailed within approximately two weeks after receipt of the request.

Duplicate Certificate Request

Candidates may purchase additional copies of their certificate at a cost of \$10 per copy. Requests for the duplicate certificate form can be emailed to certification@nrpa.org with your name, address, telephone number, and date of examination. Duplicate certificates will be mailed within approximately two weeks after receipt of the request.

Scores Cancelled

NRPA's testing agency is obligated to report scores that accurately reflect the performance of each candidate. For this reason, the testing agency maintains test administration and test security standards that are designed to assure that all candidates are provided the same opportunity to demonstrate their abilities and to prevent some candidates from gaining an unfair advantage over others due to testing irregularities or misconduct. The testing agency will routinely review irregularities and test scores suspected of unusual or non-standard circumstances and report such to NRPA.

NRPA reserves the right to withhold or cancel test scores if, in its sole opinion, there is reason to question their validity. Scores considered for cancellation by NRPA may be grouped into two categories:

1. Suspected candidate misconduct. In such cases, NRPA may initially withhold test scores and notify the candidates that they have the opportunity to provide additional information as requested by NRPA. NRPA may also undertake a confidential review if the circumstances giving rise to the questionable score validity. If it is determined that there is sufficient cause to question score validity, NRPA may cancel the score(s) and inform the involved parties.
2. Irregularities. Scores may be withheld and/or cancelled because of circumstances beyond candidate's control, such as defective test materials or mistiming. In such cases, candidates will be informed and offered an opportunity to retake the examination if NRPA determines that scores must be cancelled.

In addition to the reasons listed above, NRPA may withhold or cancel examination results if, upon investigation, violation of NRPA policies outlined in this publication has been committed.

Appeals

Applicants desiring to appeal their examination score may write a letter of appeal to the NCB. In the letter, candidates should state reasons why they do not agree with the examination outcome. Written appeals must be received within sixty (60) days of the examination date for the appeal to be considered. Send to NCB, c/o National Recreation and Park Association, 22377 Belmont Ridge Road, Ashburn, VA 20148.

Your Status as a Certified Playground Safety Inspector

If you pass the CPSI Examination you will be awarded the CPSI designation as a Certified Playground Safety Inspector. The NCB will issue a National Certified Playground Safety Inspector certificate to each individual who passes the examination approximately eight (8) weeks after the results are released.

Your certification is valid for three (3) years. No additional examinations will be required during that time. NRPA will provide information about maintenance of certification with your certificate. To facilitate communications, Certified Playground Safety Inspectors are required to advise NRPA of address, phone and email changes.

Statement of Non-Discrimination

The NRPA, NCB and Pearson VUE do not discriminate among applicants on the basis of age, gender, race, religion, national origin, disability, or marital status.

SECTION II: STUDY GUIDE

General Examination Preparation

The study and test-taking advice described here may be helpful as you prepare for the examination. Try to be objective about yourself and your individual learning needs when you are deciding how best to proceed with your study.

A. Study Advice

Determine how you study best. Some students seem to learn faster by hearing the information, while others need to see it written or illustrated, and still others prefer to discuss material with colleagues. A combination of these alternatives can often produce the most effective study pattern. If you had success in lecture courses with little outside review, it may be that you need to hear information for best retention. If you find that you prefer to read material, then you might consider jotting down important facts on a 3x5 card. You can refresh your memory by periodically reviewing these cards. This technique is especially effective if you write the material thoughtfully and concisely, allowing you to digest the material through both reading and writing. You may wish to organize a study group or find a study partner. Once you decide on the method most effective and comfortable for you, focus on that preference and use the other techniques to complement it.

Plan your study schedule well in advance. Use learning techniques, such as reading or audio-visual aids. Be sure you find a quiet place to study where you will not be interrupted.

B. Test-Taking Advice

The advice offered here is presented primarily to familiarize you with the test directions.

- 1. Read all instructions carefully.**
- 2. The actual examination will be timed. Although the time remaining during the test can be shown on the computer screen, you may want to bring a watch to the test center.**
- 3. For best results pace yourself by periodically checking your progress. This will allow you to make any necessary adjustments. Remember, the more questions you answer, the better your chances of achieving a passing score.**
- 4. Be sure to record an answer for each question, even those of which you are uncertain. You can leave questions blank and come back. Avoid leaving any questions unanswered; this will maximize your chances of passing. It is better to guess than to leave a question unanswered; there is no penalty for guessing.**

Re-Examination

Candidates who fail the examination or who do not appear for a scheduled examination may be admitted to a future examination, provided they complete all current registration procedures and pay applicable fees.

Exam Content Outline

This outline illustrates the course content area and the percentage of questions on the certification exam that are based on each content area. You need to review this outline in preparation to take the exam.

<u>Content Area</u>	<u># of Items</u>
I. The Playground Safety Milieu	5
A. The historical evolution of the Playground Safety Movement	
B. U.S. organizations and governmental agencies involvement	
II. Role of Child Development	5
A. Characteristics of users	
1. anthropometrics	
2. disabilities	
B. Range of users-age appropriateness	
III. The Foundation of Playground Safety Surfacing	16
A. Impact attenuation criteria-critical height	
B. Use zones-dimensions and overlap	
C. Surface testing: what, how, who	
D. Unitary surface products	
E. Loose-fill surfacing materials	
F. Accessibility-approach	
IV. The Playground Infrastructure: The Equipment	32
A. Fall height	
B. Performance requirements	
1. head and neck entrapment	
2. sharp points and sharp edges	
3. protrusions	
4. entanglement	
5. pinch, crush and shear points	
6. suspended hazards	
C. Guardrails & Protective Barriers	
D. Structural characteristics	
E. Installation	
F. Specific types of playground equipment	
1. balance beams	
2. climbers	
3. upper body equipment	
4. sliding poles	
5. slides	
6. swings	
7. equipment not recommended	
8. moving, rotating, or rocking components	
9. roller slides	
10. seesaws	
11. spring rocking equipment	
12. log rolls	
13. track rides	
14. roofs	
15. climbing ropes	

- G. Materials and manufacture
 - 1. structural designation
 - 2. metal and wood treatment
 - 3. plastics and other materials
- H. Access and egress
 - 1. rung and stepladders
 - 2. stairways
 - 3. ramps (other than wheelchair-accessible)
 - 4. other
- I. Equipment not covered by the CPSC or the ASTM
- J. Accessibility-use of equipment
- K. Platforms

V. The Playground Layout and Design 15

- A. Equipment Placement
- B. Age separation
- C. Specific equipment relationships
- D. Orientation and other environmental factors
- E. Master planning
- F. Labeling
- G. Accessibility-route of travel

VI. Playground Safety Practices/Management 27

- A. Safety Audits
- B. Safety Inspection
- C. Maintenance
 - 1. routine
 - 2. periodic
 - 3. preventive
- D. Playground evaluations
 - 1. priorities
 - 2. documentation
 - 3. record keeping
- E. Repair and replacement factors
- F. Supervision of Playground
- G. Risk reduction
- H. Preparation for litigation
- I. Risk management
- J. Staff training and evaluation
- K. Status: injury data, causes, equipment related injuries, etc.
- L. Common playground concerns: hazards, sanitation, vandalism

Total 100

The exam questions are taken from the following sources

The Consumer Product Safety Commission Handbook for Public Playground Safety (*The CPSC Handbook is available for download at no charge from their website, <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/pubs/325.pdf>)*

Read every page of this document. Do not try to memorize Tables One and Two. Concentrate on understanding the meaning of the tables. Pay special attention to the sections relating to surfacing materials, use zones, equipment not recommended for public playgrounds, equipment not recommended for pre-school age children, specific recommendations for types of equipment, and recommendations for guardrails and barriers.

The ASTM F1487-07 Standard Consumer Safety Performance Specification for Playground Equipment for Public Use (*The ASTM standard is available to download, however there is a fee, www.astm.org)*

Read every page of this document. Again, it is not necessary to memorize the tables. You must be very familiar with this document. The audit is based on the ASTM Standard. Much of the exam is based on this document.

Approximately 30% of the questions on the exam are derived from the Safety Management / Practices taught on the second day of the CPSI course. This information is not available in any printed material.

SECTION III: Certified Playground Safety Inspector - *Code of Professional Conduct*

This code sets forth the standards of professional conduct to be observed by Certified Playground Safety Inspectors upon confirmation by the Certification Board of the National Playground Safety Institute as they act in the capacity of that certification.

Certificants shall, in their professional activities, sustain and advance the integrity, honor and veracity of their certification by:

- Holding the safety of playground users paramount in all professional services.
- Utilizing the most current standards of care acceptable by the National Playground Safety Institute
- Maintaining currency and competency in playground safety auditing procedures including use of testing tools and knowledge of current safety criteria.
- Identifying and documenting all situations which are in non-compliance with the standards of care along with the citation of the specific reference portion of the criterion document, using a standard playground safety audit process.
- Prioritizing all identified non-compliances according to a standard norm of foreseeable consequences
- Advising employers or clients of seriously dangerous conditions in the most prompt manner as well as part of a written report, omitting no adverse findings from the official documentation of the safety audit.
- Never conducting a safety audit or inspection without the knowledge and consent of the playground owner.
- Never contradicting the findings of another Certified Playground Safety Inspector without first consulting directly with the first Inspector regarding the basis for these findings
- Never conducting a safety audit of a playground with the intent to discredit an owner or manufacturer or to promote sale of other equipment or products.
- Never providing findings of an audit to anyone other than the playground owner unless authorized by the owner to do so.

Certificants failing to practice these professional standards shall be subject to loss of professional certification upon a negative finding by a review process and enforcement procedures established by the Executive Committee of the National Playground Safety Institute.